

# HOW TO BOOST IMMUNITY

We wash our hands and wear masks, but what can we do to keep our immune systems strong from the inside out? We spoke to various experts to hear how they are caring for their own health now.

## THEY PRIORITIZE REST

“Data has consistently shown that lack of sleep and increased stress can have a negative impact on the ability of the immune system to function properly. These effects have been shown down to the individual cell level. I make sure that I maintain an appropriate sleep schedule (difficult as a faculty member and someone with twin 8-year-olds) and make time for myself to put my stresses away. Many of our plans have been canceled or altered this [year], so I’ve had to find new ways to reset my mind, like going for walks or getting together with a few close friends.”

—Kirsten Hokeness, PhD, professor and chair of the department of science and technology at Bryant University



## THEY START IN THE GUT

“While nutrition is not a cure-all, [good food choices] can support your overall health and reduce your risk of developing illness. In my home, we eat a lot of fiber because I love all of its prebiotic properties. Prebiotics are the food and nutrition for the probiotics in our bodies, so eating a good amount of fibrous plants is helpful and supportive of the gut microbiome, which in turn expresses immunity in our body.”

—Maya Feller, RD, specialist in nutrition for chronic disease prevention



## THEY SET WORK BOUNDARIES

“It’s important to block off weekends so you can de-stress. If you try to work seven days a week with no rest days, you will increase your stress levels, which can increase your risk of illnesses, including skin disorders, poor digestion, hormonal imbalances, cancer, autoimmune disorders, and much more. We all have to unplug to recover. And during the week, I follow a schedule to make sure I do not overwork. As soon as I hit the end of my time, I wrap it up.”

—Jeanette Jenkins, celebrity trainer, creator of TheHollywoodTrainerClub.com, and Health Advisory Board member



## THEY EXERCISE REGULARLY

“Our research has shown that 30 to 60 minutes of physical activity most days stimulates the movement of immune cells through the body, which improves surveillance against viruses, and then causes the risk of getting upper respiratory tract infections to fall 40–50 percent. I’ve taken my own data to heart and prioritize at least an hour of physical activity every day—everything from calisthenics to brisk walking to weight lifting, but my favorite is working in the gardens and landscaping around my home. Think of manual work as a full-body aerobic activity with resistance exercises.”

—David Nieman, DrPH, professor of biology at Appalachian State University and director of the Human Performance Lab at the North Carolina Research Campus

## THEY THINK HOLISTICALLY

“I tend to body, mind, and spirit, and I have been using yoga to center myself. My favorite practice right now is kundalini yoga. Each session is designed in three parts: movement, breath work, and meditation. I like these components as I think they address that body-mind-spirit aspect that is so vitally important for immunity. I also love restorative yoga. In this time where we have to focus on filling our cups back up, restorative yoga is a beautiful way to do that.”

—Michele Renee, DC, director of integrative care and associate professor at Northwestern Health Sciences University

